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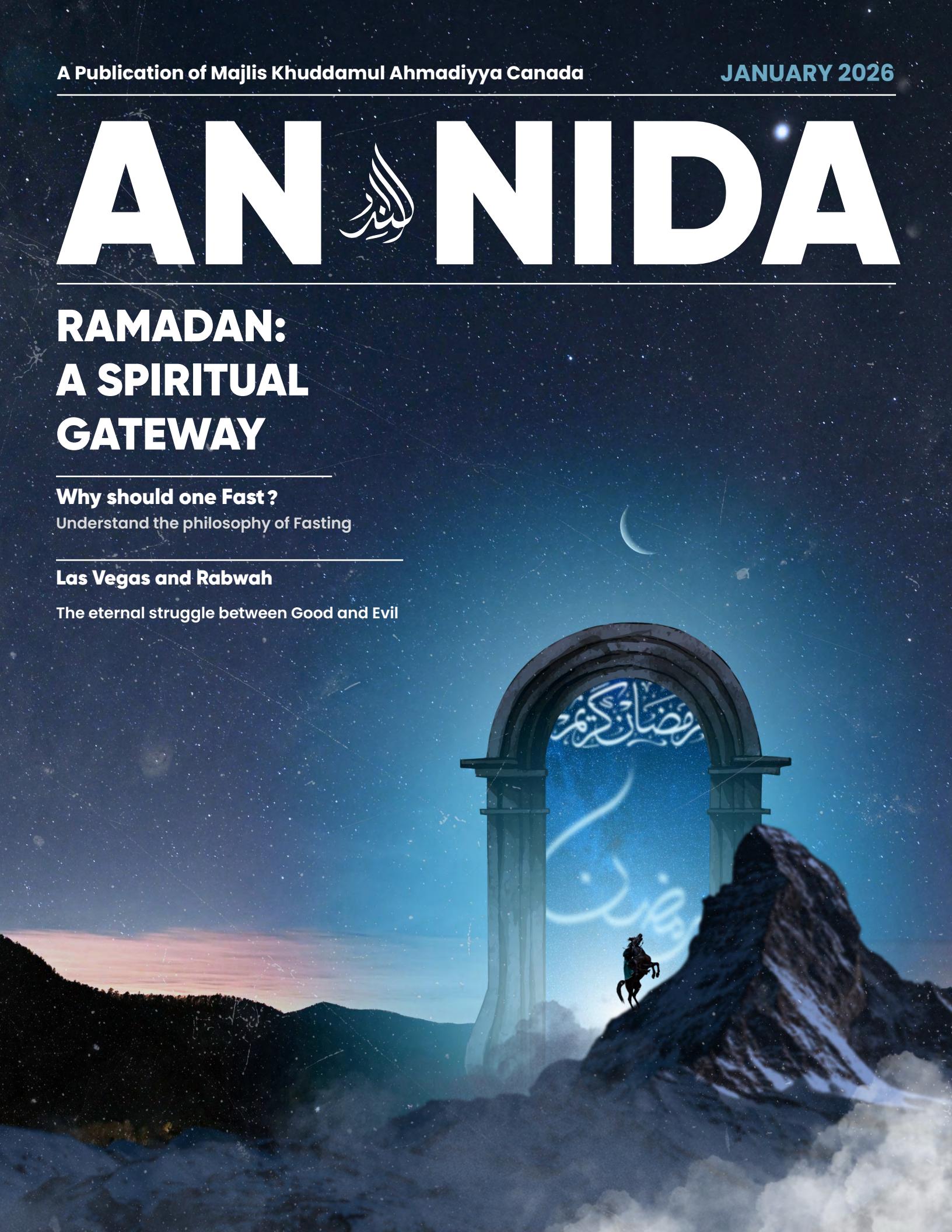
RAMADAN: A SPIRITUAL GATEWAY

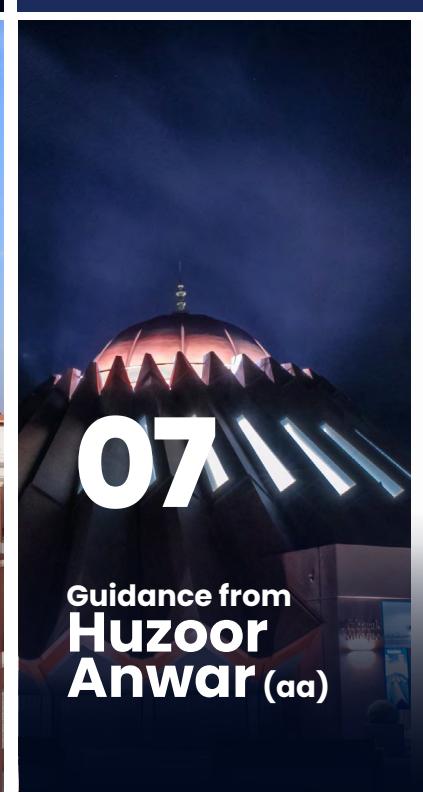
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HOLY QURAN

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا
كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

**"O ye who believe! fasting is
prescribed for you, as it was
prescribed for those before
you, so that you may become
righteous."**

Al-Baqarah : 184

HADÍTH

مَنْ لَمْ يَدْعُ قَوْلَ الزُّورِ وَالْعَمَلَ بِهِ فَلَيْسَ لِلَّهِ
حَاجَةٌ فِي أَنْ يَدْعُ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ

"The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever does not give up forged speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his leaving his food and drink"

Sahih Bukhari 1903

EXCERPT

PROMISED MESSIAH



“The month of Ramadan is a blessed one. It is a month of prayer... As for me, I only leave my fast if I have reached a state that is near death. Otherwise, my disposition feels an aversion to foregoing the fasts. These are blessed days; they are days in which the grace and mercy of Allah Almighty are sent down.”

Malfuzat, Vol 3 pg. 96



GUIDANCE FROM
HUZOOR ANWAR
MAY ALLAH BE HIS HELPER

"Thus, the Holy Quran and the month of Ramadan have a special connection. Therefore, alongside fasting one ought to ponder over the Quran and strive to act according to its teachings so that one can derive true blessings from the fasts during Ramadan. Not everyone can understand the deep intricacies of the Holy Quran, hence, along with the recitation of the Quran and reading its translations, which everyone is able to do on their own, one ought to derive benefit of the Dars [lecture] of the Holy Quran in whichever mosque the Jamaat has made arrangements."

Friday Sermon: May 10, 2019

WHY SHOULD I FAST?

"O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain righteousness" (2:184)

It is evident that a lack of self-control is very dangerous. A man can have everything: good health, a caring spouse, obedient children and wealth. However, if he cannot control his base desires, he risks losing it all. There are many examples of extremely wealthy and influential men who lost everything: respect, wealth, power and family because of their inability to control their desires. Every ailment has a cure, this ailment too has a cure. Allah, The Almighty, The Wise states: "O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain righteousness" (2:184). Fasting is a prescription from God in order for us to attain righteousness, in order for us to subdue our base desires.

A righteous person's desires and emotions are under his control. Once The Holy Prophet (sa) advised young men: "O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry, because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his modesty, and whoever is not able to marry, should fast, as fasting is a shield." (Muslim 2814a). Through fasting, our desires, our nafs is subdued, making it easier to avoid bad deeds.

Fasting weakens our nafs, allowing our ruh, our soul to have more control over us. Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) has explained this beautifully with an analogy. Imagine that your *nafs* is a horse and your *ruh* is the rider. Your ruh only compels you towards good, it never incites towards evil. However your nafs incites towards evil. At any moment if the horse

(our nafs) feels threatened or scared, it will run away wherever it wants. Such is the example of our desires, they can overcome us at any moment and lead us towards sin. In a fasted state, the horse is weak and is subdued to the rider, our ruh, inclining us towards goodness.

(Khutbat-e-Mahmood, May 19, 1922)



The Holy Prophet (sa) has stated: "There is none amongst you with whom is not an attache from amongst the devil. The Companions asked: Allah's Messenger, with you too? He said: Yes, but Allah helps me against him and so he (the devil) has become muslim" (Muslim 2814a). In another narration The Holy Prophet (sa) has stated about Ramadan: "In it the gates of heavens are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and every devil is chained up." (Sunan an-Nasa'i 2106). When we look at these two narrations in conjunction with one another, it all makes sense. Our nafs is the satan, and we can subdue it to the extent that it falls completely under our control. This is the stage known as **nafs-e-mutmainah**, the soul at peace. When we fast, when we starve this satan rendering it weak, inclining towards good becomes much easier.

Fasting is not merely abstaining from food or drink, nor is it a symbolic act devoid of meaning. It is divine training designed to restore control where it has been lost. When a person willingly restrains his most basic, lawful desires for the sake of Allah, he learns that his desires do not rule him, rather he rules them. Fasting weakens the nafs, strengthens the ruh, and makes the path to righteousness easier. This is why Allah prescribed fasting, and why the Holy Prophet (sa) described it as a shield. Through fasting, the believer progresses toward inner discipline and spiritual peace, until the soul reaches a state where obedience becomes natural and sin loses its grip. In this lies the true purpose of fasting and the wisdom behind this divine prescription.



"There is none amongst you with whom is not an attache from amongst the devil. The Companions asked: Allah's Messenger, with you too? He said: Yes, but Allah helps me against him and so he (the devil) has become muslim"

(Muslim 2814a)



THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN
GOOD AND EVIL

THE TALE OF TWO LANDS



Mustjab Qasim Kang

Murabbi Silsila, Vaughan Canada

Introduction

From the dawn of creation, Allah Almighty has established a profound duality: the eternal struggle between Good and Evil. We see the evidence of this in the Holy Quran, beginning with the classic relationship between Adam and Iblis—a conflict set to endure until the End of Days, where God has granted humans the freedom to choose their path. As Allah states in the Holy Quran:

“And by the soul and its perfection —And He revealed to it what is wrong for it and what is right for it—
He indeed truly prospers who purifies it” (91:8-10)



This phenomenon has echoed through history, taking many shapes. We see it in the opposition of Pharaoh against Moses (as), the Jewish clergy against Jesus (as), and Abu Jahl against the Holy Prophet (sa). Today, we observe this same pattern with the Muslim clergy following the footsteps of the Jewish clergy in their opposition to the Promised Messiah (as). In every era, for every force of good, there is an opposing ego that stands up and declares, “I will not bow to the commands of God.” (18:51)

However, this unique setting is not limited to humans; it is etched into the earth itself. Just as history provided a Pharaoh for every Moses (as), geography has provided a land of indulgence to contrast a land of worship, a group of people who are running towards Satan and a group who is in service to God.

In the modern world, this dichotomy is physically manifested in two specific cities: **Rabwah and Las Vegas**.

While one was founded for the sake of Divine Goodness, the other was built for the promotion of self indulgence. The connection between these two places is not merely a geographical coincidence, but a Divine sign. Both cities sit on a similar band of latitude; both are carved out of harsh, desert environments; and both began as barren wastelands. Yet, their destinies moved in opposite directions.

This article explores how, despite their physical similarities, one city was rejected by the spiritual laws of nature, while the other—through the mercy of Allah—became a vessel for His blessings.

Geographical Mirrors: Rabwah and Las Vegas

Rabwah and Las Vegas exhibit striking similarities in their origins. They share a comparable latitude, highly similar geography, and a history of being places where no one wanted to live.

Rabwah

Rabwah is situated in the Punjab region of Pakistan, along the bank of the Chenab River (Al-Hakam, "75 Years of Rabwah"). It was officially established in 1948 (Ibid). Following the partition of India and Pakistan, a significant migration occurred. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which had been established on principles of righteousness in Qadian (a small town in India), decided to migrate to Pakistan, following the example of many other Muslims under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah.



The community subsequently purchased a tract of land known to be desolate and environmentally harsh (Tareekh-e-Ahmadiyyat, Vol. 12, pp. 52). It was notorious for its soils inability to retain rainfall. Despite the adverse geographical and environmental conditions, the decision to settle there was made by the community leader at the time, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad (ra). He was a visionary and divinely guided figure, the Second Khalifatul Masih of the Promised Messiah (as). He offered prayers on this land, which was characterized by rocky hills and saline-rich soils. This land was formerly known as Chak Dhigyan, a place lacking vegetation and considered incapable of supporting future growth (Ibid).

Las Vegas

Las Vegas is situated in the Mojave Desert, now part of Clark County in the state of Nevada, USA (Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Las Vegas"). It is surrounded by mountains and lies within a basin (Ibid). Historically,



its water source was a collection of springs known as the Las Vegas Springs (Ibid). The presence of these natural water sources sustained greenery and plant life in the area, allowing it to function as a trade route stop, before it was officially established in 1911 (Ibid).

The land was originally inhabited by indigenous groups. Later, in 1855, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints constructed a fort there (Ibid), and in 1905, 110 acres of land were auctioned off to the Union Pacific Railroad (Ibid). Over time, however, the city gained notoriety for gambling and other social vices, including a consistently high rate of divorce (History.com, "Las Vegas"). As a financial system built on crime and gambling expanded, the city's infrastructure drained the natural resources, causing the springs to stop flowing (Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Las Vegas"). Now, water scarcity is prevalent in an area where water once flowed freely to support plants and trees (Ibid).

The Acceptance of Rain

What intrigued me most about comparing these two cities was not just their shared geography, but their relationship with the sky. Both Las Vegas and Rabwah sit on a similar band of latitude, baking under the same sun in harsh, desert-like environments. Both were historically desolate. However, while Las Vegas is infamous for its water scarcity, Rabwah was historically known for something arguably worse: the inability of its soil to accept water.

This phenomenon brings to mind the famous Hadith of the Holy Prophet (sa) found in Sahih al-Bukhari, known as the Parable of Guidance and Rain.

The Prophet (as) said:

"The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth. Some of which was fertile soil that absorbed the rain water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain water and Allah benefited the people with it... And a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation... The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah's religion... and the last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not take Allah's guidance revealed through me."

(Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-'Ilm, Hadith 79)

Historically, the land of Rabwah was the latter—saline, hard, and considered (dead) by experts. It refused the rain. However, a spiritual intervention changed the physical reality. When the Khalifa and the community prostrated on this land, their prayers acted as a spiritual plow. I have lived there; I have witnessed firsthand the transformation of that once-barren earth into a city of lush greenery and diverse vegetation. The prayers of the faithful seemed to soften the "heart" of the land, allowing it to finally accept the rain and bear fruit.

جاتے ہوئے حضور کی تقریر نے جناب
پاؤں کے نیچے سے میرے پانی بھا دیا

"The address of Huzur, as he was departing,
Made the water flow from beneath my feet."

(Tareekh-e-Ahmadiyyat, Vol. 12, pp. 45)

The Rejection of Rain

In stark contrast, Las Vegas—which translates to "The Meadows"—originally possessed natural springs (Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Las Vegas"). Yet, over decades of worldly indulgence, the greed of the city has effectively dried up its natural sources. Where Rabwah's spirituality turned a desert into a garden, Las Vegas's materialism turned



a meadow into a concrete wasteland that physically repels water.

This mirrors the Quranic account of Adam and Iblis. Just as the angels bowed to Adam in submission to God's command, the soil of a believer submits to the rain of mercy. But the soil of Las Vegas mimics the ego of Iblis (Satan)—it is arrogant and hardened. Because of this arrogance, it has been rejected. When rain falls there, it becomes a destructive flood rather than a blessing (Clark County Fire Department, "Flash Flood Safety"), just as Iblis was rejected for his refusal to bow.

Waiting of Angels

It appears as though the very soil of Rabwah was in a state of spiritual suspension, waiting for a Man of God and his community to arrive so that it could alter its physical structure to accommodate their needs. (*Tareekh-e-Ahmadiyyat*, Vol. 12, pp. 41).

This phenomenon mirrors the primeval command given to the angels to bow before Adam. Just as the angels prostrated to Adam in submission to the Will of God, it seems that the "angels" governing the physical elements of this land were waiting to prostrate to the prayers of God's Khalifa (*Riyad as-Salihin*, *Kitab al-Muqaddimat*, Hadith 387). Since the time of Adam, it has been a Divine Law that Allah empowers His representative by commanding the forces of nature—the angels of the earth—to fulfill the mission and desires of His servant (*Ibid*). In the case of Rabwah, the elements were simply waiting for the Khalifa to kneel upon the ground so they could finally rise to serve the objectives of the one true community.

This profound orchestration reminds me of a story concerning the great saint, Hazrat Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janaan (rh). On one occasion, upon being presented with a laddu (a sweet confection), he wished to teach his disciple, Ghulam Ali, the reality of gratitude.

The saint placed the sweet on his handkerchief, broke off a mere speck, and placed it in his mouth, exclaiming, "SubhanAllah" (Glory be to Allah). He then asked his disciple to visualize the journey of the ingredients: how, months prior, a farmer had to leave the comfort of his family to water the sugarcane in the dead of night; how he toiled in heat like the fires of hell to extract the sugar; and how thousands of people worked continuously, neglecting their own rest. (*Tafsir-e-Kabir*, Vol. 7, pp. 18-19.)

Allah had planned and set all these wheels in motion solely so that Mazhar Jan-e-Janaan could eat this single laddu. This is the way of the friends of Allah. Just as the laddu was being prepared years in advance for the saint, the land of Rabwah was being kept barren and reserved for centuries, waiting for the precise moment the Community of God would need it to flourish.

The Choice

So, what does this tale of two cities mean for us?

It demonstrates that Allah has placed within us the capacity to choose our own spiritual geography. We have been granted the intellect to distinguish right from wrong, and in the story of these two deserts, we see a physical manifestation of a spiritual truth. It poses a vital question to every soul: Do we, engulfed in the pursuit of materialism and temporary pleasure, wish to become like the hardened soil—desolate and rejected? Or do we wish to see the beauty of God's blessings take root within us?

The rain of guidance is always falling. The question is not about the rain; it is about the soil. Is your heart soft enough to accept it?

إِذَا دَخَلَ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ فَتُتْبَعِتُ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ،
وَغُلَقَتْ أَبْوَابُ جَهَنَّمَ، وَسُلْسِلَتِ الشَّيَاطِينُ

**The Prophet ^{pbuh} said: “When the month of
Ramadan starts, the gates of heaven are
opened and the gates of Hell are closed and
the devils are chained.”**

Sahih Bukhari 1899

FASTING REFINES HUMAN CHARACTER

"The institution of fasting is extremely important because it cultivates the believer in almost every area of his spiritual life. Among other things, he learns through personal experience about what hunger, poverty, loneliness and discomforts mean to the less fortunate sections of society. Abstention from even such practices during the month of Ramadhan as are permissible in everyday life plays a constructive role in refining the human character."

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh): (An Elementary Study of Islam, pp. 45-46)